

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations on the Executive Calendar: No. 574 and No. 589.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

Nanette K. Laughrey, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri.

Dean D. Pregerson, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

NOMINATION OF DEAN D. PREGERSON

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to thank the majority and minority leaders as well as the Judiciary Committee chairman, ORRIN HATCH, and ranking member, Senator BIDEN, for moving an outstanding judicial nominee, Dean Douglas Pregerson, to the floor for confirmation to the United States District Court for the Central District of California.

The Central District of California includes the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura.

Dean Pregerson has been a practicing attorney in California and in the Territory of Guam for the past 18 years. He has tremendous experience in a broad range of legal issues and a record of exceptional performance in many different aspects of the practice of law. He has been a public defender, a legal aid lawyer, and a litigator of a wide variety of civil and criminal matters in both State and Federal courts. He is currently a partner in the Los Angeles law firm of Pregerson, Richman and Luna, where he has personally litigated many issues, including contract and commercial actions, intellectual property matters, and personal injury disputes.

Mr. Pregerson has a long record of service to his community. For the past 5 years, he has been a board member of Bet Tzedek Legal Services, which provides free legal help to about 12,000 Los Angelenos a year. He is on the advisory board of the GSA/Salvation Army homeless shelter of Bell, CA, which provides food, housing, and other services to more than 200 men and women each day. He began his service for the Recreation and Parks Commission of Los Angeles in 1989, and served a term as its president. He has been a member of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission.

Dean Pregerson has garnered high praise from many colleagues and asso-

ciates. Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, in a letter to Judiciary Committee Chairman HATCH in February of this year, said he, "strongly supports Dean's nomination" and believes that he will be a judge "who combines legal talents with a firm commitment to uphold the traditional and proper role of the judiciary." Los Angeles Sheriff Sherman Block writes that Dean Pregerson will be "tough, fair-minded, and committed to enforcing the law" as a Federal judge and he conveys his strong support for his confirmation.

Again, I commend our leaders for bringing this nomination to the floor and confirming an individual who will be a great asset to the Federal bench and to the State of California.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

Mr. LOTT. I yield the floor, Mr. President.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this year the foreign operations bill provides \$12.246 billion to administer our foreign assistance programs. This slightly exceeds the bill signed into law last year but is more than \$700 million below the administration's request. Although this is a substantial reduction, I believe we have crafted a bill which addresses congressional concerns about balancing the budget while continuing to serve vital U.S. national security priorities.

Let me briefly review both the funding levels and policy provisions which advance our common international interests.

In title I, we have provided \$632 million for export promotion programs. The Trade Development Agency and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation are fully funded, and the Export-Import Bank is near the request level.

Virtually all of us have learned of the direct benefit these programs have had in securing new markets and opportunities for American business. While some people have expressed concern about our subsidizing American corporations, this support we offer in this

bill is a reflection of how competitive the international market has become. I believe our export promotion programs are essential to our long-term economic security.

If you have any doubt about the significance of this funding, there is one statistic which makes clear how important our competition thinks these programs are. Last year the Export-Import Bank extended \$2.9 billion in loans. Its Japanese counterpart provided \$19.3 billion in support.

While I am a strong supporter of the Bank, I have been deeply concerned about recent management problems. Both the Office of Personnel Management and the General Accounting Office investigated the Bank's misuse of certain salary-related authorities. In a 1995 audit, OPM concluded that retention allowances have been granted to approximately 200 of the Bank's 450 employees "contrary to law and regulation." Instead of meeting the legal requirement of establishing an employee's unique qualifications and intent to leave Government service, the current management at the Bank treated retention allowances as performance bonuses.

While the problem was drawn to White House attention, the acting Chairman's nomination pending before the Banking Committee was resubmitted as a recess appointment. This has prompted the committee to limit funding for the Chairman's salary until this matter can be fully reviewed in the context of a nomination hearing.

Let me now turn to title II. We have provided \$1.7 billion in funding for development assistance, including child survival programs, and the Development Fund for Africa, the Inter-American Foundation and the African Development Foundation. This level is close to the administration's request and was a high priority of Senator LEAHY and a majority of the members of the committee.

Within the bilateral aid account there are a handful of earmarks including funds for Camp David Partners, Burma and Cyprus.

Given our strong interest in securing the transition of free market democracies, we have fully funded the administration's request for the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union. In addition to earmarking levels of support for Ukraine, Armenia, and Georgia, the bill provides funding for safety programs at nuclear reactors, small business development, strengthening agricultural productivity, and treatment for children who are victims of the Chernobyl disaster.

While not in statute, I want to take note of important report language regarding Russia.

President Yeltsin has made a lot of extravagant financial pledges on the campaign trail which must be reconsidered if the nation is to stay within IMF fiscal guidelines and sustain economic reforms. The committee points out that the outcome of the elections reflects U.S. assistance is less important